(b) and (c) The number of accidents per one thousand vehicles has been indicating a declining trend as can be seen in the Table given below:—

Year	Population of vehicles of all categories in thousands	No. of accidents	Accident per thousand vehicles
1996	33723	371204	11.00
1997	37231	373671	10.04
1998	40939	385018	9.40
1999	45000	386456	8.59
2000	48393 (Provisional)	391449	8.09 (Provisional)

Government of India has been taking several measures pertaining to engineering and education to improve the safety on the roads. Coordination with State Governments is also being maintained to enforce various provisions of Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 in this regard.

Condition of National Highways

320. SHRI S.S. CHANDRAN: Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the pathetic conditions of the National Highways after the flood and drought every year and the inadequate funds for maintenance of National Highways all over the country;

(b) if so, whether there is any proposal pending with Government for allocation of more funds for the States for better maintenance of National Highways; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (MAJOR GENERAL (RETD.) B.C. KHANDURI): (a) to (c) Repairs to damaged sections of National Highways due to floods and other reasons are attended to expeditiously through

the State PWD or the maintaining agency and the roads are restored in traffic worthy condition. Government has also initiated the programme for improvement of Riding Quality of existing National Highways since 1999 to supplement maintenance effort. Riding Quality of about 23,000 kms has so far been improved. Riding Quality of the balance length of National Highways is targeted to be improved within the next two years. During the current year the assessment of funds for repairs to National Highways due to flood damages is Rs. 203 crore, against which funds to the tune of Rs. 91 crore could be allocated keeping in view the availability of funds and *inter-se* priority.

The requirement and allocation of funds for maintenance of National Highways during the last three years are as under:

Year	Requirement (Rs. in crores)	Allocation of Funds (Rs. in crores)
2000-2001	1350.00	702.50
2001-2002	2000.00	725.00
2002-2003	2000.00	799.47

Highway connecting four Metros

321. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have launched some years back a project to link the four metros with four-lane highways;

(b) if so, the estimated cost of the project as originally fixed and the time-frame by which it was scheduled to be completed;

(c) the present status of the project;

(d) whether there has been any cost and time overrun and if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps taken to ensure timely completion of the project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (MAJOR GENERAL (RETD.) B.C. KHANDURI): (a) Yes, Sir. The project linking the four metros with